

Resilience in Action

2023-24 Impact Report







CoastShelter

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ABN 46 095 999 287



Hardship and homelessness is increasing on the Central Coast. The rising cost of living, unemployment, domestic and family violence, drug and alcohol dependence and mental health challenges combine to create a complex web of disadvantage.

Coast Shelter works to break this cycle through the delivery of a growing range of innovative services. By providing immediate crisis support we are able to help build long-term resilience in our clients.

This report tells the stories of their resilience, in action.

Acknowledgement of Country

Coast Shelter acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live and work, the Darkinjung people. We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging.

We recognise the deep connection to Country that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples maintain, a connection that has not only held strong but thrived for over 60,000 years. We acknowledge that this connection has been threatened by dispossession, leading to disproportionate rates of homelessness and domestic and family violence among First Nations communities.

As an organisation committed to supporting those affected by homelessness and domestic and family violence, we pledge to work alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our shared goal of a community where everyone has a safe place to call home and is empowered to thrive. We are dedicated to fostering an environment of respect, reconciliation, and equality as we strive to provide shelter and support to those in need.



Ngapa Jakurrpa (Water Dreaming) – Puyurru

About the Artist and Artwork

Lynette Nangala Singleton is an artist from Nyirripi Community, located roughly 450km Northwest of Alice Springs.

Lynette has been painting since 2008. She paints her Father's Jukurrpa stories, Dreamings which relate directly to her land, in particular a rock hole west of Lake McKay. These stories have been passed down by her father and her father's father for millennia.

Coast Shelter sought permission to use Lynette's Ngapa Jakurrpa (Water Dreaming) – Puyurru for our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.



A Year of Consolidation *and Resilience*





As we reflect on the past year, resilience stands out as a defining characteristic of Coast Shelter, our staff, volunteers, and the clients we serve. Despite unprecedented challenges, including a deepening housing availability crisis and escalating cost of living pressures, the unwavering commitment of our community has been nothing short of inspirational.

The increased demand for our services has tested our resources and resolve. So it is with great pride that we report our staff and volunteers have not only met but exceeded expectations, continuing to surpass our contractual targets. These achievements demonstrate the resilience of our team members.

In the spirit of transparency, we acknowledge that 2023 presented several internal challenges for the leadership of the organisation. The departure of our CEO and several key staff members along with an unexpected spill of all board directors impacted our organisation with unforeseen out of budget expenses. These events tested our organisational and financial resilience with Coast Shelter returning a net deficit of $1.5m (FY23 surplus of $25,626).

The year-on-year change was mainly driven by an increase to isolated one-off costs during the year. Approximately $500k of this reported deficit was as a result of statutory accounting provisioning and $989k was as a result of an increase in isolated one-off costs during the year. 30% of the deficit consisted of salary and wages intended to be funded by a grant with the remaining 70% of costs associated with the transition from the former CEO, including consultancy and legal expenses incurred as a result of the changes of leadership at Coast Shelter and the spill of the previous Board of Directors.

Given the modest surpluses in the prior two years, along with our reported surplus YTD in this financial year we are confident these are outlier events in the past and we are well on track to returning a healthy surplus for the 2024/25 financial year. When normalised the result is strong with resilient cashflows.

We used these challenges to consolidate our strengths and refresh our approach. We recruited a new skills-based Board, bringing fresh perspectives and diverse expertise to guide our organisation. We welcomed a new CEO, a COO and other key staff members, injecting new energy, skills and experience into our leadership team.

This allowed us to overhaul our 2024-27 strategy and business plans. We have realigned our corporate structure to support this new direction while ensuring full compliance with regulatory requirements. Significant investments are being made in critical areas such as clinical governance, cybersecurity, risk management and board governance, to support our future growth plans.

Coast Shelter is now operating profitably and as planned, with solid financial reserves and improving stability, despite ongoing cost pressures. We are excited about our 2024 plans to expand our client services, including a new youth refuge, adding new beds and clinical wraparound support services to the northern end of the Coast. We are also actively refreshing our non-grant funding activities to ensure a diverse and sustainable financial base.

Most importantly, we have seen a stabilisation of our company culture. People are our business, and this renewed sense of purpose and unity serves as a strong foundation for our ambitious goal: to double our client capacity from serving one in three client referrals to two in three by 2028.

We are deeply grateful for the continued support of our partners, donors, and the wider community. Your belief in our mission has been an ongoing source of inspiration. Together, we will continue to build a more resilient, compassionate, and inclusive Central Coast community.

Paul Murnane
Chair

Lee Shearer
CEO

About Coast Shelter

Coast Shelter, based on the Central Coast of New South Wales, has been a cornerstone of community support since its establishment in 1992. Originally founded to feed people experiencing homelessness in the region, our organisation has grown to provide a broad range of services aimed at supporting the most vulnerable members of the community.

Over the past three decades, Coast Shelter has significantly expanded its reach and impact, now operating various programs that include crisis accommodation, domestic and family violence services, clinical support, early intervention and education programs and youth support. Our Community Centre continues to help the most vulnerable people in our community by providing free meals and access to financial, medical and personal support services.



Our Specialist Homelessness Services cover the entire Central Coast, with ten crisis accommodation refuges spanning from Woy Woy in the south to Toukley in the north, addressing issues such as homelessness, domestic and family violence, food insecurity, and financial hardship. Coast Shelter is also a Tier 3 Community Housing Provider, which means we meet the national standards for delivering safe, affordable, and sustainable housing to vulnerable individuals and families. As a Tier 3 provider, Coast Shelter plays a crucial role in addressing housing insecurity on the Central Coast, offering crisis accommodation and transitional housing to those in need. This accreditation reflects our commitment to maintaining high-quality housing services while working with local partners to support residents in their journey toward stability and independence.



We continue to work closely with local partners, government bodies, and volunteers to ensure that individuals and families receive the care and resources they need to rebuild their lives after periods of crisis. Our commitment to providing safety, dignity, and hope continues to be a vital force in improving the wellbeing of the most vulnerable members of the Central Coast community.

Strategic Direction

Our Guiding Principles

- Coast Shelter is a leader in the homelessness sector, delivering ongoing, sustained and targeted campaigns advocating for Government to deliver the interventions and solutions needed to address the issues.
- Coast Shelter delivers trauma informed care to clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and domestic and family violence to enable them to live their best life.
- We recognise the role that trauma plays in the day to day lives of the people we support and we provide a trauma informed culture where people feel safe and supported.
- Living their best life means improving satisfaction for our clients with their standard of living, health, achievements in life, personal relationships, how safe they feel, community connection and future security. We are committed to providing a supportive, consistent and predictable level of care for people and supporting them to live their best life.

Our Strategic Direction for 2024-2027

At Coast Shelter, our vision for the future is focused on creating lasting, positive change for the Central Coast community. As we look toward the next three years, we remain deeply committed to supporting vulnerable individuals and families, while continually improving the quality and reach of our services.

We recognise that the need for our services continues to grow at an unprecedented rate. The challenges faced by our community, exacerbated by economic pressures and social changes, demand that we not only maintain our current level of support but significantly expand our capacity to help. To address this growing need, we are placing a strong emphasis on increasing our unrestricted funding. This financial flexibility is crucial as it allows us to respond swiftly to emerging crises, invest in innovative programs, and ultimately help more people in our community who desperately need our support.

Our Strategic Direction for 2024-2027 is centred around four strategic focus areas, which will guide our efforts and ensure we stay true to our mission:

- People are at the heart of our work
- A compassionate, high-performing team
- Building strong community relationships and partnerships
- Demonstrating good stewardship

These focus areas will not only help us deliver the best possible outcomes for those who rely on our support, but also strengthen our internal capacity, forge vital partnerships, and ensure the responsible management of our resources. By embedding these priorities into all aspects of our work, we aim to foster a culture of compassion and accountability, while continuing to evolve and grow in response to the changing needs of our community.

> **"As the need in our community grows, so must our capacity to respond. Our focus on increasing unrestricted funding is not just about financial flexibility—it's about expanding our ability to create lasting, positive change for more individuals and families on the Central Coast. Every dollar empowers us to innovate, adapt, and ultimately, to transform more lives."**

Paul Murnane, Chair

2023-24 Highlights











1 Minister Bill Shorten announced Services Australia would place a **Community Partnership Specialist Officer** at Coast Shelter's Community Centre, ensuring they are meeting our clients where they are, working with them individually to understand their circumstances and tailoring support to connect them to essential government services.

Supported 19 Young People via the **Bail Accommodation Support Service Program** in 2023-24

Renovations and refreshes completed on almost all of our SHS properties, including new flooring, bathrooms, painting and furniture.

Significant grant funding secured for social inclusion activities across all programs.

Twenty young clients successfully trained through our **social enterprises.**

2 **Winner of Outstanding Community Organisation 2023** and **Business of the Year 2023** at the Wyong Business Awards.

Highly Commended for Outstanding Community Organisation 2023 at the Central Coast Business Awards.

3 Successfully rolled out the **new junior Love Bites program**, bringing the total number of students we were able to reach to 7,741 in 26 schools.

4 Facilitated the **Name, Narrate, Navigate (NNN) program** to 4 schools, with an overwhelmingly positive impact on students reported, including increased attendance rates and decreased suspension rates. Students are so interested in the program that there is now a waitlist for participation.

5 Raised record funds at our annual **Sleepout** event, with proceeds going towards our unfunded programs.

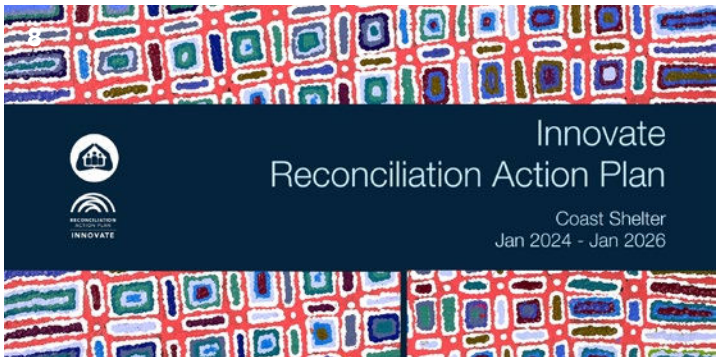
6 **CS CEO Lee Shearer AM and CS Domestic Violence Case Worker Deb Sorensen** represent Coast Shelter, alongside **Domestic Violence Committee Vice-Chair Sharon Walsh** and Gosford MP Liesl Tesch, to advocate for the need for more funding in the DFV space on ABC news program Stateline.



7 Hosted **the largest reconciliation event** in the state, with 34 event sponsors funding Indigenous performers and grass roots First Nations organisations.



8 Our **Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan** was fully endorsed by Reconciliation Australia and partnerships were formed with all Aboriginal-controlled organisations on the Central Coast.



9 Working in partnership with **Primary Health Network** to deliver a primary care domestic and family violence medical program for women and children within our refuges to improve health and wellbeing.

Commencement of the development of a comprehensive **Case Management framework**, including new procedures for Workflow, Intake and Assessment, Case Planning and Coordination, and Exit and Transfer.



Our **Intake and Assessment Officer** consistently receiving positive feedback from clients, who are saying they feel heard, respected and understood by Coast Shelter staff.

Increasing positive outcomes with **Alcohol and Other Drug** clients and strong collaboration with **The Glen for Women, Kamira** and **DCJ** to address client needs and family restoration where at all possible.



10 Secured two years of grant funding for our **Specialised Workers for Children and Young People** team.

Our Impact 2023-24

SPECIALIST HOMELESSNESS CLIENTS

1,132
Total clients supported

410
Domestic violence

431
Women

123
Men

282
Youth



120 Women and children accessed social inclusion activities

145 Children and mothers participated in a new supported playgroup, facilitated by staff with training in Early Childhood and Community Services

COMMUNITY CENTRE

16,665
Total visits



16,465
Total meals/hampers

SPECIALIST HOMELESSNESS CLIENTS

436

Clients supported with mental health and drug and alcohol counselling

7,741

Students we delivered healthy relationships education to

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

974 SHS clients supported

across all services with domestic and family violence as their reason of engagement (86% of all clients supported)

410 women and children supported

through our Domestic Violence Rapid Enhancement program (254 clients above the number of clients we are funded to support)

VOLUNTEERS IMPACT

6,041

Total hours

$261k+

Monetary value



Monetary value is calculated via this link from The Centre for Volunteering:
https://www.volunteering.com.au/resources-tools/cost-of-volunteering-calculator/

Operational Overview

Resilience in the Face of Crisis



The 2023/2024 financial year has been one of unprecedented challenges for Coast Shelter and the communities we serve. As cost-of-living pressures intensified and the housing crisis deepened, we have observed a 55% increase in demand for our services, coupled with increasingly complex community needs. Despite these challenges, Coast Shelter's commitment to our mission and the resilience of our staff, volunteers, and clients have enabled us to adapt and respond effectively to these growing needs.

Cost-of-Living Pressures and the Housing Crisis

The past year has seen a perfect storm of economic pressures bearing down on our local community. Sadly our most vulnerable community members are impacted the greatest. Inflation rates reached levels not seen in decades, driving up the cost of essentials such as housing, food, utilities, and transportation. The housing market continues to grow, with rental prices soaring and availability plummeting to critical lows.

These combined factors have had a profound impact on our client base:

1. **Increased Risk of Homelessness:** Many individuals and families who were previously just managing to keep a roof over their heads found themselves unable to meet rising rental costs, pushing them to the brink of homelessness.
2. **Food Insecurity:** With household budgets stretched to breaking point, we saw a significant increase in the number of people seeking assistance with necessities, particularly food.
3. **Mental Health:** The constant stress of financial instability has taken a toll on mental health, with many clients reporting increased anxiety, depression, and feelings of hopelessness.
4. **Domestic Violence Spike:** Economic pressures have unfortunately contributed to an increase in domestic violence cases, as existing tensions within households escalated further with increasing financial pressures.

Effect on Coast Shelter's Operations

The rapidly changing environment presented significant challenges to our capability to support clients:

1. **Capacity Strain:** Our crisis accommodation programs quickly reached capacity, forcing us to explore creative solutions to meet the growing need.
2. **Resource Allocation:** With more clients requiring intensive support, we had to carefully balance our resources to ensure we could continue to provide quality care across all our programs.
3. **Staff Wellbeing:** The increased workload and emotional toll of dealing with more complex needs put additional pressure on our team members, requiring improved systems and well-being strategies to further support our team members health and well-being.
4. **Funding Challenges:** While the demand for our services increased, we faced the challenge of securing additional unrestricted funding in an economic climate where many traditional donors and corporate partners were also feeling the financial strain.





Our Response to Increased Demand and Case Complexity

In the face of these challenges, our team members have demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability. Our response focused on innovation, collaboration, and maximising the impact of our available resources:

1. **Expanded Emergency Response:**
    - Implemented a rapid rehousing program to move clients in a timely manner from crisis accommodation to more stable housing options.
    - Expanded our reach through providing more outreach support. This means providing early intervention support to clients to help prevent homelessness where possible.
2. **Enhanced Support Services:**
    - Invested in the development of our wrap around services such as our clinical team to address the complex needs of clients facing multiple challenges.
    - Reinvested in practice management, to allow for regular case reviews for our team members to provide opportunity for ongoing reflective practice.
3. **Community Partnerships:**
    - Strengthened collaborations with local businesses, government agencies, and other non-profits to create an increased support network for our clients.
    - Further developed our community food share program, partnering with local supermarkets, small businesses and corporate partners to address food insecurity and our ability to meet demand at our Community Centre.
4. **Staff Support:**
    - Invested in training opportunities to provide our team with ongoing development and supported team members to attend conferences and key networking opportunities to support continued growth and development.
    - Completed an organisation-wide psychosocial review, consulting with teams and addressing their feedback. Identified the risks to our team members and worked closely with them to mitigate those risks as much as possible.
5. **Advocacy and Awareness:**
    - Intensified our advocacy efforts, working closely with all levels of government to highlight the urgent need for affordable housing solutions, increased funding for early intervention programs and the need for longer term funding commitments to provide increased stability for the sector, our team members and our clients.

While the challenges we face are significant, the resilience demonstrated by our team members volunteers and clients over the past year gives us confidence in our ability to continue meeting the needs of our community. As we move forward, we remain committed to our mission of providing shelter, support, and hope to those in need and recognise that the support of our donors, the dedication of our volunteers, and the collaboration with our community partners are more vital than ever.

Youth

Coast Shelter operates five specialist homelessness services, or refuges, for young people aged 16-24 across the Central Coast. In the past year, Youth Services supported 313 clients, which exceeded our contracted numbers by approximately 25%. We also saw a decrease in the length of stay for many clients, allowing us to assist a larger number of young people with crisis accommodation and support services.

Social Inclusion Grant Impact

Our Youth team received a $22,000 grant to enhance social inclusion for young clients. This funding enabled us to organise enriching outings to places like Raging Waters, the Reptile Park, and bowling centres. For many clients, these were their first opportunities to participate in social activities outside of a crisis setting. These experiences helped build confidence, broaden social networks, and foster personal growth, providing a sense of normalcy and community connection.

Comprehensive Support for Complex Needs

We continued to address increasing complexities in our clients' lives, particularly around issues related to alcohol and other drugs, mental health, and disability. By collaborating closely with our clinical team and external service providers, we delivered comprehensive, integrated care to help clients navigate these overlapping challenges. This holistic approach has significantly improved outcomes, ensuring clients receive the specialised support they need to move forward in their recovery and independence.

The team has also seen success in transitioning clients to and from rehabilitation programs. Our team worked diligently to support individuals through these processes, resulting in many clients achieving long-term positive outcomes. These successes reflect the hard work and commitment of our staff, who help clients build resilience and a pathway to stability.





Youth Services supported

313 clients

which exceeded our contracted numbers by approximately 25%

Good News Story

A Path to Independence and Community Impact

At 17, Sean* faced a challenging family breakdown and sought a fresh start to rebuild his life. Initially, he struggled with significant hurdles, including a lack of essential documentation and unresolved issues from his past. However, he showed resilience and a desire to overcome these obstacles.

After previously staying at Coast Shelter and not being ready for change, Sean acknowledged his past issues and committed to turning his life around. Sean's case worker supported him in obtaining crucial documents like a Medicare Card, Birth Certificate, and Photo ID, and completed the RYSS Living Skills and Rent It Keep It programs, earning certificates that prepared him for independence.

Sean passed the Learners Permit test which allowed him to start driving lessons and secured a trainee position at COTM, where he excelled. After securing employment, Sean moved back in with his father, demonstrating significant personal growth with improved focus on his career. Recently, he joined a Kick Boxing Academy in Erina, where he trains in Muay Thai and is being supported to become a future mentor. This new endeavour reflects his continued growth and his determination to make a positive impact on his community.

*Name changed to protect identity



Refuge Upgrades and Safety Enhancements

This year, we completed security upgrades and renovations across several of our refuges. These improvements have enhanced safety for both staff and clients, while also creating more welcoming and functional spaces. The upgrades support a better environment for engagement, therapy, and everyday living for the young people we serve.

In partnership with Fantastic Furniture in West Gosford, we secured a significant discount on all furniture purchases, which has allowed us to refresh most of our refuges with modern, comfortable furnishings. This ongoing partnership has been instrumental in transforming our spaces into more inviting and supportive environments for clients, ensuring they feel safe and at home during their stay.

Development of a Bail Assistance Program

A key focus this year has been the development of the Rondeley program, in which we are working with Bail and Accommodation Support Service to divert young people away from the justice system and prevent reoffending. This refuge provides young people involved in the Youth Justice system with a safe, structured environment during their bail periods. The goal is to offer critical support, helping youth meet bail conditions and avoid further contact with the justice system. The Bail Refuge opened in July 2024, representing a significant step forward in our commitment to increasing our capacity and helping vulnerable youth.

Women and Children

In the 2023/2024 financial year, Coast Shelter's three women and children's refuges continued to provide vital safe havens for women experiencing homelessness and escaping domestic and family violence. These refuges offer more than just shelter; they provided a supportive environment where women and children could begin their journey towards healing and rebuilding their lives. Throughout the year, our dedicated staff worked tirelessly to maintain a nurturing atmosphere, offering trauma-informed support and practical assistance to help residents navigate their path to independence and safety.

Creating Safe and Welcoming Spaces

This year also saw significant improvements to our refuge facilities. All three houses underwent extensive refreshes and renovations, aimed at creating more welcoming, comfortable, and functional spaces for our clients. One house received a brand-new playroom, with new furniture and toys and a fresh lick of paint providing our women and children with a therapeutic safe space to relax, engage with our case workers, make connections with other clients and let kids do what they do best - learn, laugh and play.

> **"It was a beautiful day to be outside. I've noticed an improvement in my mental health when regularly leaving the refuge and being a part of the social activities. I just feel more clear headed."**

Resilience in action

Amy's Story: From Crisis to Hope

When Amy* and her two young children arrived at one of our refuges, they were fleeing a life-threatening situation of domestic and family violence. Classified as being at serious risk, their need for immediate relocation was critical for their safety.

From the moment they stepped through our doors, our caseworkers provided not just a safe haven, but a comprehensive support system. Amy and her children received financial assistance, access to on-site medical care, specialised counselling services and crisis management support to help navigate their challenging circumstances.

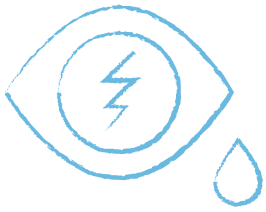
Our team worked closely with local domestic violence police units and the Department of Community and Justice (DCJ) to ensure the family's ongoing safety. After three months of intensive care and guidance, Amy and her children achieved a significant milestone: securing stable housing. This marked not just the end of their time in our refuge, but the beginning of a safe new chapter. Amy has transitioned into the community and the children are now enrolled into the local daycare. Amy is also enrolling into university to study Social Work.

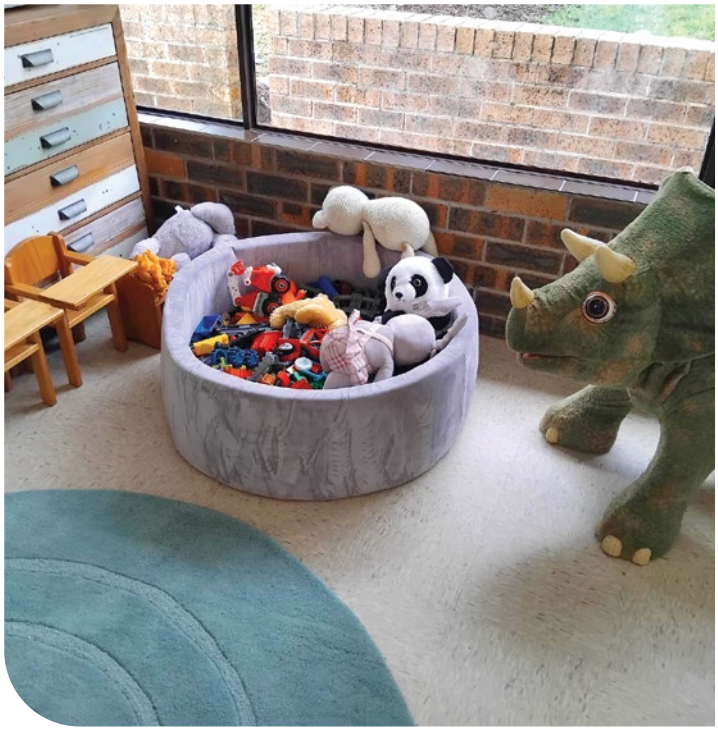


*Name changed to protect identity

86%

of adults who experienced domestic and family violence (nationally) in the last 12 months had a child/ren in their care who witnessed ("saw or heard") the violence.





Supporting Children and Young People Impacted by Domestic and Family Violence

Coast Shelter's Specialised Workers for Children and Young People Program provides specialist case management for children and young people who accompany their mother into refuge. Recognising the profound impact DFV has on young lives, the program offers trauma-informed, family-centered, and culturally safe services aimed at improving outcomes for those at risk. It helps young people access education, healthcare, and community participation, reducing the likelihood of future victimisation and long-term negative effects on their wellbeing.

Caseworkers provide tailored support and advocacy in areas such as education, healthcare, mental health, and child protection. This includes facilitating access to school wellbeing services, securing preschool placements, arranging medical and therapeutic services through programs like NDIS, and offering one-on-one parenting programs. Weekly playgroups are also held at the larger refuges, encouraging parental involvement and providing a supportive space for families to bond and heal.

Building Community, Rebuilding Lives

Coast Shelter's Social Inclusion Program continues to be a cornerstone of our holistic approach to supporting individuals experiencing homelessness and domestic violence.

The program is essential for women staying in crisis accommodation after experiencing domestic and family violence (DFV) because it helps rebuild a sense of community, connection, and belonging. After enduring isolation, control, and abuse, many women feel disconnected from society and lack the social support needed to recover. Social inclusion initiatives provide them with opportunities to engage with others, reduce isolation, and rebuild confidence, which is critical for their emotional and psychological healing.

This year, the program has made significant strides in fostering community connections and promoting personal growth for the women and children we support. Through art and craft workshops, market trips, adventures to the Reptile Park and skills-based classes, we've helped participants build confidence, develop new talents, and forge meaningful relationships with their peers and children.

The program's success is evident in the increased engagement and improved mental well-being of our clients, with many reporting a stronger sense of belonging and purpose.

Men

Coast Shelter's men's refuge is the only dedicated Men's crisis accommodation service between Hornsby and Tweed Heads, providing essential support for men experiencing homelessness or crisis. The service offers a safe space, case management, and a range of support services to help clients resolve barriers, rebuild their lives and regain independence.

Fostering Collaboration for Change

Recognising a critical gap in services for men on the Central Coast, our Men's Service Manager worked alongside other local services and partners to establish the Central Coast Men's Community of Practice (COP). This initiative was established to improve support for men by fostering collaboration between community sector services and sharing best practices. A Men's COP is essential on the Central Coast because it fills a gap in coordinated, male-focused support. Men experiencing homelessness, domestic violence, and mental health challenges often have unique needs that can be overlooked or underserved by existing services. By coming together, service providers can build stronger partnerships, share insights, and develop tailored strategies to address these issues more effectively. The team's commitment to this interagency collaboration extends beyond the direct work of their own service, aiming to create a comprehensive support network that enhances services for men, their families, and the wider community.



Delivering Life-Changing Support Through The Together Homes Program

Continued funding from the NSW Government, and in partnership with Pacific Link Housing, has seen the Together Home program continue to support and permanently house rough sleepers and men facing complex challenges through a housing first and personal support model. This program is essential as it helps individuals transition from homelessness to a stable living situation, offering tailored assistance to meet their unique needs.

A key success story involves a caseworker who advocated for a client to receive a motorised scooter, improving his mobility and independence. This support enabled the client to participate in everyday activities that most take for granted, such as grocery shopping. This individualised assistance highlights the team's commitment to helping clients regain autonomy and fostering a sense of belonging in the community. Through these efforts, the team continues to make a significant impact in the lives of those they support.

Google review

Craig*

I was living in my car for 5 months when I was introduced to Coast Shelter. It's now been 12 months and I'd like to say a BIG THANK YOU. The men's team helped me get my life back on track. Assistance above and beyond, and the welcoming to the community was really heartwarming. Thank you again for all the support, getting me housed and my life back. I also would like to give a special thanks to Krystal in the Community Centre for the extra can of tuna on my birthday! To all the guys and girls at Coast Shelter, God bless. From my van, to a small apartment, to a house! It was the step up I needed.

*Name changed to protect identity

Recognising a

critical gap

in services for men on the Central Coast, our Men's Service Manager worked alongside other local services and partners to establish the Central Coast Men's Community of Practice



Resilience in action

From Homelessness to Hope

After years of struggling with homelessness, Doug felt hopeless. His learning disability made navigating housing applications difficult, and without support, he had nearly given up on finding stable housing or reconnecting with his son.

Things improved when Doug connected with Coast Shelter's men's team. They helped him through the housing process and supported him in managing his daily life. With their help, Doug started gaining visitation rights with his son, with weekend visits becoming a real possibility.

Just when it seemed like Doug might have to return to temporary housing, he received two housing offers. The first was a bedsit, not suitable for visits with his son, but the second was a two-bedroom unit. Doug accepted it with relief, knowing it would allow him to rebuild his life and relationship with his son. Thanks to the support of his dedicated case workers, Doug is now on a path to stability.



Domestic Violence Rapid Enhancement

Coast Shelter's Domestic Violence Rapid Enhancement (DVRE) team provides accommodation via one of our crisis accommodation properties, as well as outreach crisis support via safety planning, advocacy, case management, assistance accessing financial and legal support including victim support payments, counselling, medical care, storage solutions, rental searches, and housing applications.

Emphasising a holistic approach, the DVRE team not only provides essential support to victims of domestic violence but also ensures that their children receive the care and resources necessary for healing. This year, the team have supported over twice the number of clients as they are contracted to, demonstrating both the incredible need for these services on the Central Coast, and also the team's dedication to fostering safety, stability, and a brighter future for all individuals and families affected by domestic violence.



73%

of all clients presented domestic and family violence as their primary reason of engagement.

Resilience in action

Sophie's Path to Freedom

Sophie* moved to Australia with her husband nearly 20 years ago, settling on the NSW Central Coast. With no friends or family here, she felt isolated and unsupported. Her husband controlled the family's finances, scrutinising every dollar she spent on household needs, and he didn't allow her to work outside the home. As a result, Sophie spent most of her time caring for their two children.

Over the years, her husband's heavy drinking worsened, and he became increasingly verbally and sometimes physically abusive toward Sophie and their children, especially their eldest daughter, who was now a teenager. Sophie wanted to leave, but without an independent income, she felt trapped.

Eventually, Sophie developed a close friendship with another woman from her home country, which made her feel a little less alone. Despite her husband's objections, Sophie started a job in the finance sector, where she learned more about domestic violence. This was when she realised that the controlling and abusive behaviour she had endured for so long was not normal—it was domestic violence.

Sophie reached out to Coast Shelter's Domestic Violence Response Enhancement (DVRE) team, who provided her and her children with temporary accommodation in a safe house. Because of the chaos at home, Sophie had been unable to work, which jeopardised her independence. The safe house gave her the stability to return to her job, allowing her to save money and work towards her goal of securing a private rental.

Before long, Sophie achieved that goal and is now looking forward to a future free from abuse. She has expressed her gratitude, saying she "could not have done it" without the safe house accommodation and the support of the DVRE team at Coast Shelter.

*Name changed to protect identity.

Resilience in action

The Importance of Holistic Care

A family (a mother and 2 children – 6 and 2 years old) was being supported at one of our women and children's refuges, and the six-year-old client was grappling with a recurrent ear infection that plagued him bimonthly. These infections brought relentless pain, discomfort, and high fevers, leaving the mother worried as she noticed oozing from her child's ears—signs of a potentially perforated eardrum.

Recognising the urgency of the situation, the primary care outreach nurse acted swiftly. Within a short time, a hearing test was conducted, revealing alarming results: the client was at risk of permanent hearing loss unless prompt treatment from an Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) specialist was provided. Unfortunately, the public system had a daunting waitlist of 12 to 18 months.

With the unwavering support of the PHN medical team, the waitlist was navigated effectively, significantly shortening the wait time. Remarkably, the client was seen by an ENT specialist and underwent surgery within just two months.

This intervention transformed the family's daily life. The constant cycle of recurring antibiotics came to an end, allowing the client to sleep more soundly and experience far less discomfort. His hearing improved, giving the chance to engage fully with the world around him.

Crucially, this support came at the perfect time. The family completed their journey through the refuge with the child's health issues resolved, allowing his caseworkers to assist them through appointments and hospital stays. With health restored, the client was ready to start kindergarten in just a few months, stepping into a new chapter with confidence and excitement.

PHN Partnership

Over the past two years, our Women's Services have forged a vital partnership with the Primary Health Network (PHN) to enhance healthcare access for clients in our women and children's refuge. The PHN developed a Domestic and Family Violence Primary Care Outreach team who aim to improve the short, medium, and long term health outcomes for women and children who have experienced DFV while residing in crisis accommodation.



Originally operating under a pilot model, the PHN have recently received funding which will ensure the continuation of this collaboration, which aims and delivers upon providing holistic medical care directly at refuge sites via way of weekly clinics. These clinics address the unique barriers our clients face in accessing healthcare. By offering weekly clinics staffed with GPs, nurses, speech pathologists, and maternal child health nurses, we have effectively reduced obstacles such as safety concerns, limited appointment availability, and the complexities of managing multiple health issues for both mothers and children. With the continuation of these essential services, the primary care outreach team can continue to link and refer our clients to additional health resources as needed. Together, we are committed to improving the overall well-being of our clients, ensuring they receive the comprehensive care they deserve.

Community Centre

The Coast Shelter Community Centre is a vital resource for the Central Coast, providing practical support and a safe space for those navigating homelessness and crisis support. It plays an essential role in supporting individuals experiencing hardship in our community, and through our comprehensive support services and commitment to client well-being, we aim to uplift and empower those who come to us for help.

We provide lunch and dinner five days a week, shower facilities, laundry facilities, internet and computer access and hampers assembled from food items generously donated by amazing local businesses and community members. We continue to engage our clients with social groups such as Art Therapy – encouraging creative expression as a form of emotional support, and Connecting Threads – a sewing group promoting social interaction and skill development. We also engage outside podiatry services to work from the Community Centre monthly, providing our clients with crucial footcare and mobility throughout the year.

Each month we bring essential services to the clients by having a Connect Day with Homes NSW, Services Australia, Service NSW, Coast Shelter's Employment Specialist and Community Hearing. This initiative allows clients to access crucial support such as accessing rebates, senior concession information, and resume writing in a convenient and familiar setting.

Changing Faces of Need

The Community Centre team has observed a noticeable shift in the demographic of individuals utilising our services this year. We are increasingly seeing older adults who are struggling to manage their expenses, leaving them with limited funds for essential daily living needs.

This trend highlights the growing impact of rising living costs on our community's most vulnerable members, particularly pensioners and retirees, and demonstrates the critical role our Community Centre plays in providing a safety net for those facing financial hardship.





Good news story

A Network of Support

When Brisbane Water Police recently contacted our Community Centre about an elderly gentleman in distress, it set in motion a chain of community support. Recently widowed and alone in the motel he and his wife had long called home, he found himself struggling to manage daily life.

Our team quickly coordinated with local services to address his immediate needs. Temporary accommodation was secured through Link2Home while Catholic Care arranged a longer-term solution. Working together with Service NSW, Wesley Mission Finder, and Services Australia, we helped establish a bank account and Centrelink payments in his name.

The Community Centre provided practical assistance too – food hampers, eye care, meals, and a haircut. Importantly, we offered a welcoming space where he could connect with others during this challenging time.

Learning he had no family in Australia, our Community Centre team leader took the extra step of arranging his wife's funeral and delivering the eulogy.

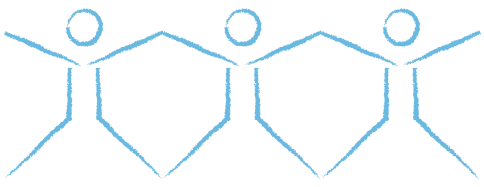
Today, the gentleman resides in a Central Coast nursing home, receiving all the attention and care he needs. His story highlights how coordinated community efforts can make a real difference in someone's life during difficult times.



Partnering to Increase Our Impact

The Community Centre was proud to participate in the Revenue NSW Service's Connect Hub this year. We assisted 37 clients on the day, assisting with Work Development Orders (WDO) to help pay off fines, assistance with ID proof of age cards & Opal cards, support with Centrelink and gaining birth certificates. This event was a great success, showcasing the importance of collaborating with government and non-government organisations to support our clients effectively.

The Community Centre also partners with Aldi, and Woolworths Gosford and Lisarow for food donations, Health on the Streets Mobile Health Service (HOTS) to provide health services to our clients, and NDIS to support individuals with disabilities. We are also in constant contact with Homes NSW, Services Australia, Service NSW, and NSW Police to coordinate comprehensive assistance for all of our clients needs.



Service Evolution

Coast Shelter's social enterprises—CS Espresso, a mobile coffee cart, and Coasties on the Move, a furniture removal service—offer supportive and positive employment experiences for young people in crisis. By equipping these young people with essential life skills and access to support services, including mental health care, drug and alcohol counselling, and vocational guidance, we've seen improved resilience, confidence, and motivation, and observed a significant reduction in their re-entry into crisis accommodation and dependency on welfare.



This year has been particularly exciting as we've formed new partnerships to further enhance our programs. Working with Sanitarium's Human Resources team, we've launched a quarterly Job Skills Program, and through the Local Jobs Program, we offer early access to training and employment opportunities. We've also developed strong employment pathways with Gosford RSL, Gosford Golf Club, Ettalong Bowling Club, Ettalong Diggers, Doggy Day Care, Moov Modular, Central Telecoms, Ausgrid, Scholastic, Pet Stock, and Planet Fitness.

23/24 Social Enterprise Achievements

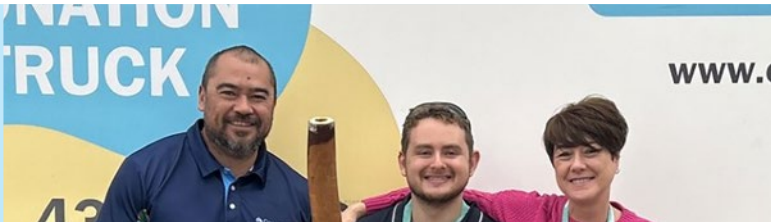
- 20 trainees completed the programs (10 each)
- CS Espresso attended 65 community events
- Coasties On The Move collected 390+ furniture donations, delivered furniture items to 288+ clients and completed 59 house removals
- Trainees gained qualifications in First Aid, Responsible Service of Alcohol, Warehousing, Responsible Certificate of Gambling, Construction Induction Card (White Card), Food Safety Handling, Hospitality, Personal Training, Group Fitness and Barista Coffee Preparation

Resilience in action

Eden's Journey: A Story of Growth

Eden, a 22-year-old First Nations man, came to the Coasties on the Move (COTM) program with no prior employment history. After losing his father in Year 10 and facing the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic, he struggled with depression and anxiety, believing his dream of securing an apprenticeship had slipped away.

During his time with COTM, Eden's confidence grew significantly. His mental health improved, and with support he successfully completed his Certificate III in Warehousing. He was connected with Bara Barang's Driver Mentor program to help him obtain his P Plates, and also took on a leadership role at our Community Centre, assisting with food rescue collections and guiding volunteers.



Eden was introduced to Ausgrid, where he earned a position in their highly sought-after Electrical Pre-Apprenticeship. Despite the challenge of travelling to Sydney daily for six weeks, he completed the program and is now awaiting his pre-employment medical to begin his journey as a mature-age apprentice. In the interim, Eden secured additional work at Scholastic Australia, balancing three days a week there while continuing two days a week with COTM. We are so proud to have been a part of his journey.

Employment and Training

Empowering Youth: The Role of Our Youth Employment Specialist

At Coast Shelter, we understand that sustainable independence for our clients goes beyond providing immediate shelter. Our Youth Employment Specialist plays a crucial role in this holistic approach, offering tailored support to young people in our refuges as they navigate education, training, and employment opportunities.

Working in collaboration with our multidisciplinary team—including youth mentors, caseworkers, and clinical staff—our Employment Specialist develops comprehensive case plans. These plans identify each client's unique strengths and also address potential risk areas, ensuring a well-rounded approach to their development. By fostering engagement with support networks and improving community connections, we help our clients build resilience and the capacity to face future challenges.

Our Youth Employment Specialist is instrumental in the success of our social enterprises. They provide ongoing support and motivation, helping young participants stay committed to their work and training journey. This guidance is often the key to transforming short-term opportunities into long-term success stories.

In the 23/24 financial year, our Youth Employment Specialist assisted:

- 20 young people to gain employment with CSE and COTM
- 18 clients from refuge to gain external employment
- 7 clients to commence work experience
- 18 clients to commence vocational education
- 36 clients to attend job interviews

20

young people gained employment with CS Espresso and Coasties on the Move.

Resilience in action

A Journey of Growth and Opportunity

When Jayson first came to Coast Shelter through his Disability Employment Services Provider, he faced multiple challenges. As a young trans man with a learning difficulty and anxiety, Jayson had never held paid employment and struggled with self-confidence.

Recognising Jayson's potential, we connected him with a local Hospitality Skillset program. This opportunity allowed Jayson to gain valuable certifications, including First Aid, Responsible Service of Alcohol, Food Safety and Hygiene and others.

During his time with Coast Shelter, Jayson's confidence has blossomed, and he's embraced his trainee role with enthusiasm, particularly enjoying customer interactions. He has become an active participant in Coast Shelter's events, even representing us at Darkinjung's NAIDOC Celebration, where he and his fellow trainees impressively served 650 coffees in a single day.

Jayson's growth hasn't stopped there. He recently participated in the Sanitarium Job Skills Program and is currently gaining work experience at Gosford RSL with the aim to secure long-term employment and independence.

Clinical Team

The Clinical Team at Coast Shelter came together as a fully operational unit in July 2023, marking a pivotal moment for the organisation's ability to deliver comprehensive clinical support to adults, families, youth and children. This team is multidisciplinary, comprising of qualified Social Workers, Counsellors, and an Art Psychotherapist who specialize in trauma counselling, alcohol and other drug counselling, play therapy, and Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT).

At the core of the team's work is a trauma-informed, person-centered approach. This model recognises the widespread effects of trauma on individuals and society, aiming to address these impacts while empowering clients through tailored support. By emphasising the creation of a safe, non-judgmental environment, the team helps clients feel heard, respected, and understood, fostering an atmosphere conducive to healing. With a focus on avoiding re-traumatisation, the team prioritises relationship-building and client participation in care decisions, promoting autonomy, dignity, and a sense of ownership over their recovery journeys.

> **I just wanted to say I appreciated all our time we had together and all the resources I was given access to while I was working with you. I have seen an improvement within myself since I've had my art sessions with you. I'm excited to use art again as a positive outlet.**
>
> **Young person**, 20,
> Art Therapy client



Client Impact and Growth

Since its formation, our clinical team has become an integral part of Coast Shelter's comprehensive support system. In the past year alone, they provided vital mental health and therapeutic services to 313 clients across our various programs, underscoring the critical need for these specialised clinical interventions. This impressive reach demonstrates how our clinical services complement our housing and crisis support, offering a holistic approach to healing and empowerment. The team's work spans across our women and children's, men's, and youth services, ensuring that psychological care is accessible to all who need it.

Coast Shelter's unrestricted funding streams have been crucial in allowing our clinical team to grow and thrive. We currently support six dedicated clinical staff members. This unrestricted funding is vital as it allows us to flexibly respond to emerging client needs, invest in ongoing professional development for our team, and maintain continuity of care even when government or grant funding fluctuates. The value added by our clinical team is immeasurable – they not only provide immediate crisis intervention but also work on long-term healing and resilience-building, significantly improving outcomes for our clients and reducing the likelihood of future crises. Their presence enhances the quality and depth of our service offerings, making Coast Shelter a leader in comprehensive care for vulnerable individuals in our community.

> **"I felt like you saw me, it's the first time that I have felt like someone understood what I was going through. It was freeing."**

Woman
Alcohol and Other Drug client

Diversifying Service Delivery

In 2023-2024, the clinical team expanded its service delivery by introducing group options, increasing our capacity to reach more clients needing psychosocial support.

- "Picture This" Art Therapy: A creative space where clients use art to explore connection and creativity
- SMART Recovery Alcohol and Other Drug Groups: Offering structured, peer-led recovery support for individuals dealing with addiction.
- "Building Resilience" Men's Group: Focusing on psychosocial development, emotional regulation, and empowerment.
- "Thriving Minds" DBT Psychoeducation: A group dedicated to teaching clients DBT skills to manage emotions and build healthier relationships.

New Spaces and Professional Development

The Clinical Team has recently moved into a new space, Oak House, which includes two dedicated clinical rooms. This new environment supports both service delivery and the ongoing professional development of our clinicians, providing a platform for continued learning and growth. Oak House will serve as a hub for delivering tailored support in a purpose designed space while also fostering an environment for staff to enhance their expertise.



Brokerage Support

Through our brokerage services, we have provided life-changing support for clients in need:

- Assisted 8 clients in accessing rehabilitation services.
- Supported 7 clients in obtaining autism spectrum disorder (ASD)/ ADHD assessments, helping them secure more appropriate housing and ongoing support.

Referral Process and Pathways

We have enhanced our referral-out process to engage more effectively with external health services and private practices such as Headspace, Victims of Crime Therapeutic Services, and Odyssey House Rehabilitation Service. This effort has resulted in better and more expedient pathways for clients to continue receiving mental health and AOD support after leaving Coast Shelter. Strengthening these partnerships ensures a seamless transition for clients into long-term care, safeguarding their recovery and wellbeing.

University Partnerships

Our commitment to learning and development extends beyond our clinical staff, as we have welcomed four social workers and two counselling students who have completed their placements with us. These placements provide invaluable practical experience while allowing our students to contribute meaningfully to our services. Coast Shelter also collaborates with the University of Newcastle for research and evaluation purposes. Last year we engaged UON to evaluate four mental health and alcohol and other drug (AOD) clinical roles, with the results revealing a significant reduction in psychological distress among clients and highlighting the positive impact of tailored, flexible care. This ongoing collaboration not only supports evidence-based service delivery but also reinforces Coast Shelter's position as a leader in specialist homelessness services.

Love Bites Program

Love Bites is a Respectful Relationships Education Program for young people aged 11-17 years.

This year, our Love Bites program reached new heights, especially with the introduction of the junior program, designed to engage younger students in meaningful conversations about respect and relationships. The challenges faced by schools and students this year have been immense, yet the program has thrived, with increased participation and positive reception from schools. This reflects not only the importance of the content but also the determination of our team to bring these essential messages into schools.

We are proud to have facilitated the program for more students than ever before—our facilitators have demonstrated incredible commitment, showing up with enthusiasm and positivity for every session. Their dedication to the students and the program has been a true testament to their passion for making a difference in young people's lives.

A highlight was our visit to Aspect School, (a school for students on the Autism Spectrum) where students responded with enthusiasm and engagement. The connections made in that environment were deeply rewarding, showing the program's profound impact. Our team has shown incredible adaptability in navigating new school partnerships and rolling out this updated curriculum. The integration of new team members has been seamless, and their contributions have been invaluable, adding fresh energy and ideas to the already outstanding work being done.

LOVE BITES
RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE | NAPCAN PREVENT CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT



Reflect & Respect Program

A powerful program designed specifically for women who are at risk of or have experienced domestic, family, or sexual violence. Our primary goal is to provide a safe and supportive environment where participants can embark on a journey of healing, self-discovery, and empowerment.

The Reflect & Respect program at the women's refuge has provided a vital space of connection and healing for women navigating incredibly difficult circumstances. In a year marked by increasing housing instability and heightened personal struggles, the women participating in the program have consistently demonstrated a remarkable commitment to their own growth and recovery. The program not only offers essential resources but also fosters a deep sense of belonging and mutual support among participants.

The team have continued to step up to ensure the program continues to meet the evolving needs of our clients. During staff training sessions, we saw impressive engagement, with the team actively participating and offering valuable feedback to refine the program. Their dedication and openness have allowed us to maintain a client-centered approach, ensuring the program remains both relevant and impactful amidst external challenges. Moving forward, we are committed to adapting and strengthening this program to continue serving our clients effectively.





Good news story

Planting Seeds of Change Beyond the Classroom

We were delighted to recently welcome a former student of St. Peter's Catholic College and current journalism student, Ellouise Ham, to Love Bites HQ for a visit. Ellouise chose to focus on the Love Bites program for one of her university assignments and visited us. Hearing how deeply the program impacted her during her time at school was incredibly rewarding, and showed the positive influence our programs continue to have on young people even after they leave school.

When speaking with Ellouise about why the program had such an impact on her, she shared a few things that she took away from the education:

"I still remember the main thing I picked up on was consent and red flags. We were talking through different scenarios of what that looks like and I remember an activity where we learnt what coercive control was and what that looks like in a relationship."

"I think that this program should be a part of the NSW curriculum. It allows young people to open their eyes and be able to detect what behaviour feels right or wrong when in a relationship with someone. I also think that to be able to think about these topics and not have rose coloured glasses on and let things slip is something that needs to be taught as early as possible."

"I've been really interested in the domestic violence national rallies and supporting local NGOs since leaving school and Love Bites felt like the most valuable program to put my weight behind. Early intervention programs need to be pushed more rather than programs for after the fact."

NNN Program

Name, Narrate, Navigate (NNN) is a preventive intervention program focused on psychoeducation and skill development for young people at increased risk of using violence, those already using violence and in their interpersonal, family and domestic relationships.

Facilitating the NNN Program at Lake Munmorah High School has been a standout. Despite the complexities many of their students face—whether due to personal or societal challenges—our facilitators have made significant strides in fostering trust and building rapport. This year, we have seen students increasingly open up and engage with the program, a testament to both the resilience of the young people we work with and the commitment of our team to create a safe, supportive environment.

The relationship we have built with the staff at the school has also been instrumental in ensuring the continued success of the program. Together with the teachers, we've worked to break down barriers and build an atmosphere of understanding. Our team has continually adapted to meet the changing needs of students, demonstrating commitment and creativity to ensure the program's relevance and effectiveness.



Team Highlights

The performance and resilience of our team at Coast Shelter is reflected to us in our shared success and the outcomes we achieve for our clients.

It is with pride that we look back on the significant strides our team have made over the past year towards our mission to deliver person-centred services to people in crisis within our community experiencing homelessness or domestic and family violence.



116
team members

4%
of our team members are First Nations

81%
of the team are in Client Programs

4 years
average length of tenure

2,331+
total hours of Learning & Development or 28 hours per person



Congratulations Ann Evans!

After 32 years at Coast Shelter, we farewelled Ann Evans in her role as Payroll Officer. Ann was one of the first team members of Coast Shelter and held the longest tenure with us. Throughout her time at Coast Shelter, Ann evolved as the organisation did fulfilling a variety of roles, always bringing with her strengths of adaptability and precision. We are so grateful to Ann for her commitment and contributions over the course of our history.

We wish Ann the very best for her future and look forward to staying connected in this next chapter of her life.

Growth and Wellbeing

Facilitating an environment where our team members feel supported to be at their best whilst at work and in their lives is a key focus of our strategy. This year, we have been working to develop a Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy which aims to prevent harm through eliminating and minimising risks and hazards and promotes the wellbeing of our team members. Consultations across the organisation have been facilitated to best equip us in delivering a Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy that is meaningful and valuable to our team. We look forward to finalising and launching the strategy in the next financial year.

Additionally, we have launched the People Manager's Community of Practice, a collective which brings our People Manager's together with a focus on capability and collaboration across Coast Shelter.



Our Values

Trust

"We strive to deepen client and stakeholder trust through the quality of our service delivery and our responsiveness and accountability in everything we do."

Respect

"We deeply value humanity – it inspires us to be real with one another, inclusive and accepting of each other's differences."

Connection

"We build and maintain strong connections with our clients, co-workers and the community, to expand our network of support and create a greater impact on the Central Coast."

Innovation

"We are creative and adaptive, we explore out of the box ways to solve challenges "



Our values underpin the culture of our workplace and the way in which we work with each other, our clients and the community. Living our values enhance our collective impact and we recognise our team members living out our Values through our Quarterly Values Awards. Over the past year, we have received over 63 of nominations by team members nominating their colleagues for their outstanding demonstration of our Values.

Our People

Diversity and Inclusion

At Coast Shelter, we are committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace where all team members are supported to thrive.

This year, we established a Diversity & Inclusion working group, with team members across the organisation focused on shaping a workplace culture that not only attracts diverse talent but also retains and nurtures it.

Enabled by Technology

Equipping our team with the tools and resources to achieve in their roles is of utmost importance and this year, we implemented Employment Hero as our new people management platform. The platform provides our team with information about their employment, policies, a communication channel and a place to support their performance and growth.

Volunteer Contributions

With the support of our volunteers, our commitment to achieve a more inclusive and supportive community for all is enhanced. We immensely value the contributions of our volunteers towards our vision and mission as they support us in extending our impact. Our amazing team of 206 volunteers work across Coast Shelter in our Community Centre, in our Love Bites, Refuge and Service Evolution teams and with our Marketing and Communications team, supporting our fundraising events. This year, they have donated over 6,041 hours of their time cooking warm meals in our community centre for our clients, providing clients with literacy support to enhance their learning, advocating for us in the community and so much more! We extend a heartfelt thank you to our Volunteers for their extraordinary efforts and commitment over the past year.



206
volunteers

6,041
volunteer hours

Reconciliation Action Plan



Our Commitment to Reconciliation

We are proud to share the endorsement of our "Innovate" Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) by Reconciliation Australia. Our "Innovate" RAP marks our ongoing commitment to achieving our vision for reconciliation, to see that all connected to culture and community are free from domestic and family violence. We are committed to providing inclusive and appropriate support for all First Nations people, their kin and community.

A highlight for the year was hosting a National Reconciliation Week event at Gosford Stadium; with over 1200 participants including our team members, clients and members of our community and sponsored by 33 businesses and organisations.

Partnering Towards a Common Goal

At Coast Shelter, our clients remain at the very core of our mission, driving every decision and action we take. However, our valued corporate partnerships provide the vital support needed to sustain and expand a lot of our wraparound efforts. These collaborations enable us to reach more individuals, enhance our services, and create lasting change in our community. By joining forces with like-minded organisations, we amplify our impact and continue to build a stronger safety net for those who need it most.

Eastcoast Beverages

Eastcoast Beverages has been an invaluable partner in our mission to nourish our community. Their commitment to local produce aligns perfectly with our goal of providing fresh, healthy meals to those in need. This year, Eastcoast Beverages' generous donations of juices and products have not only supplemented our food programs in the Community Centre and refuges, but also brought a touch of comfort and normalcy to our clients' lives. Their financial and in-kind support exemplifies how local businesses can make a significant impact in addressing food insecurity in our community.



> **At Eastcoast, we're proud to support Coast Shelter and their incredible efforts in helping those in need across the Central Coast and our local community. Through regular product donations, participating in outreach initiatives and sponsoring Sleepout, we are honoured that we can contribute to their mission in a meaningful way. It has been a fruitful partnership for many years, and we're excited for the opportunity to continue making a positive impact in our community for many more to come.**

Samuel Lentini, Managing Director

Southern Cross Austereo – Hit 101.3 and Triple M

Our partnership with Southern Cross Austereo over the last three years has been instrumental in amplifying our voice across the Central Coast. Their dedication to community engagement resonates deeply with our mission to raise awareness about homelessness and domestic violence. Through targeted radio campaigns and on-air discussions, Southern Cross Austereo has helped us reach a wider audience, educate the public about our services, and inspire more people to get involved.



Community Partnerships

Sanitarium

Sanitarium's long-time partnership with Coast Shelter reflects our shared commitment to promoting health and wellbeing in our community. Their regular donations of nutritious breakfast foods have been a cornerstone of our Community Centre hampers and stocking the pantries of our refuges, ensuring that our clients start their day with proper nourishment. Beyond food donations, Sanitarium has also continued to support us financially and provide valuable nutritional education resources, aligning with our holistic approach to care.

> **For the past 20 years, Sanitarium Health Food Company has proudly supported Coast Shelter, and we couldn't be more grateful for the opportunity to engage in such impactful community initiatives. What we cherish most about this partnership is the chance for our employees to get hands-on. Whether volunteering at the community kitchen, making financial contributions, or participating in annual events, the involvement fosters a deeper connection to our community.**

Amanda Ekman, Community Care Manager

Moov Modular

Moov Modular's commitment to sustainable, affordable and community-focused development mirrors our own values, making this partnership a shining example of how business innovation can address critical social needs. Their financial and employment pathway contributions this year have made a significant impact on our client outcomes. We continue to explore options for how their innovative approach to modular construction could work in with our need for flexible, rapid-response housing options, in order to increase our capacity to be in a position to help more people across the Central Coast and further afield.

> **We really admire the team at Coast Shelter and the work they do for vulnerable and people in need. Having seen the great support they provide in their kitchens on a daily basis and to hear from the staff about their work with their clients, it's clear they make a huge difference in the community. Moov Modular are proud to be able to continue our support and urge businesses and individuals to lean in and help where they can.**

Nick O'Neill, Managing Director





Fundraising Initiatives in 2023/24

Coast Shelter's fundraising initiatives in the 2023/24 financial year were instrumental in allowing us to expand our services aimed at breaking the cycle of homelessness and domestic and family violence.

Our annual Christmas Appeal was a significant success, raising record funds to support our Community Centre, refuge clients and support programs over the Christmas period. Community events, such as our annual Coast Shelter Sleepout, raised an incredible $234,000 and saw overwhelming participation from local businesses and individuals, highlighting the power of collective action in addressing homelessness and domestic violence. Through these initiatives, we strengthened our relationships with key stakeholders and created greater awareness of the ongoing challenges faced by vulnerable members of our community.

We Can't Do It Alone

Support from our generous donors, local businesses, and the broader community plays an essential role in enabling us to implement interventions that help prevent re-occurrence and empower our clients to thrive. Contributions from the community have allowed us to invest in critical services such as mental health and crisis counselling, vocational training, and early intervention education programs, helping our clients build the skills and confidence needed to achieve long-term independence. This year, we also secured new corporate partnerships, providing both financial support and in-kind donations that directly benefit our clients.

The impact of this support is immeasurable, although we do try! Every dollar raised and every in-kind donation received helps us expand our services and adapt to the growing demand across the Central Coast. With this backing, we are able to increase our capacity, deliver more targeted programs, and offer more transitional housing options, creating a pathway for our clients to move from crisis to stability. Coast Shelter remains deeply grateful for the continued generosity of our supporters, which empowers us to transform lives.

United in Purpose

Coast Shelter recognises that addressing the complex issues of homelessness and domestic violence requires a united front. Our partnerships with organisations like Pacific Link Housing are fundamental to our approach. These collaborations allow us to leverage diverse expertise, resources, and perspectives, creating a more comprehensive support system for our clients. By working closely with Pacific Link Housing, for instance, we can provide a seamless transition from crisis accommodation to more stable, long-term housing solutions. This continuity of care is crucial in helping individuals and families rebuild their lives.

The power of interagency cooperation cannot be overstated in our field. Regular interagency meetings and collaborative projects enable us to share knowledge, coordinate services, and identify gaps in support. This collective approach not only enhances the quality of care we provide but also helps us advocate more effectively for systemic change. By aligning our efforts with other community organisations, government agencies, and service providers, we create a stronger, more cohesive network of support. This united approach is essential if we are to make a lasting impact on the issues of homelessness and domestic violence in our community. Together, we can achieve far more than any single organisation could alone, moving us closer to our vision of a safe, secure, and supportive Central Coast for all.



Acknowledgements

Thank you to Donors, Volunteers and Partners

The incredible outcomes achieved in 2023-24 would not have been possible without the generous support we received from our community. We are so grateful to each and every donor, corporate partner, small business, school and community supporter who continue to inspire us with their passion, dedication and belief in our purpose. Our work is also generously supported by various trusts and foundations, universities and government bodies which enable us to deliver quality services to those who need it most. Thank you all for allowing us to continue delivering programs that achieve so much in our community.

While we've endeavoured to recognise all who have contributed to our mission this year, the breadth of support we've received is truly humbling. If we've inadvertently overlooked anyone, please know that your contribution, regardless of its size, has made a significant impact. Every act of kindness, every donation has been instrumental in bringing our vision to life. We are profoundly grateful for each and every one of you who has been part of our journey this year, including those who have wished to remain anonymous.

Major Donors

Dr Ajay Chennamchetty

Dr Padma Korremula

National Club Ltd

Mr & Mrs Barry & Elizabeth Frost

The Mann Family Office

Katie Thomson - Good Rehab

Government, Peak Bodies and Partners

NSW Government

NSW Government Communities and Justice

NSW Government Fair Trading

NSW Government Social Services

NSW Government Transport Roads and Maritime Services

Australian Government Department of Social Services

Central Coast Council

Central Coast Domestic Violence Committee

Domestic Violence NSW

Homelessness NSW

Volunteering Central Coast

foundations creating a future without youth homelessness

Corporate Partners

Corporate and Community Supporters

Board of Directors



Paul Murnane AM



Michael Blanchflower



Kevin Bush



Dale Cleaver

Coast Shelter is committed to excellence in governance, adhering to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission's (ACNC) Governance Standards as a registered charity.

Our Board assumes primary responsibility for overseeing our financial management and ensuring the effective fulfillment of our strategic mission. The Board oversees the development and implementation of policies that reflect sound corporate governance. Together with our core values, these principles guide our organisation's operations and decision-making processes.

Paul Murnane AM, Chair

BEc, MBA, FAICD, F FINSIA

Paul is a corporate advisor and director with over 35 years of experience in investment banking, financial services, consulting, and management in Australia and internationally. He has served as a director for major investment banks, including Citibank and Goldman Sachs, and currently advises public companies and government boards on strategy, governance, and leadership. Paul also has extensive experience in the not-for-profit sector, having revitalized organisations and built social enterprises. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics and a Master's degree in Business Administration.

Michael Blanchflower

B Com, DipFS, GDipAppFin (FINSIA), DipCouns GAICD

Michael is an accomplished entrepreneur and governance professional with a strong background in financial services, vocational education, and adventure tourism. He grew a specialised financial services business before its acquisition by Macquarie Group and has extensive experience as a Non-Executive Director in the not-for-profit and private sectors. Michael brings a deep commitment to social impact and governance, including the mental health sector working as an Alcohol and Other Drugs addiction coach supporting participants at Dooralong Transformation Centre, and volunteering as a facilitator with the Mankind Project Australia. Michael has also spent time volunteering in the Coast Shelter kitchen over the years.

Kevin Bush

Kevin is a seasoned business leader with senior executive and CEO experience across sectors including consumer food, tourism, nutrition, and disability services in Australia and Asia. Specialising in sales, marketing, brand development, and stakeholder management, he has served on NFP, commercial, and ASX-listed boards. Kevin has a strong track record of driving transformation and growth. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Business (Finance and Accounting) and is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants.

Dale Cleaver

BA, MAICD

Dale is an accomplished senior executive with extensive CEO experience in the not-for-profit sector, including his current role at Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, where he has driven significant revenue growth and branding initiatives. He has served as Acting CEO of the Australian Red Cross and led various organisations, bringing valuable governance experience across disability, First Nations services, and eye health sectors. Dale holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Work.



Joe Coyte



Adam McEwen



Lavinia Rarinca



Lyndelle Taylor

Joe Coyte

Joe is a leader in the Australian drug and alcohol rehabilitation sector with over twenty years of experience in enhancing organisational effectiveness and service delivery. He currently serves as Executive Director of The Glen for Men and Women Centres, as well as the Ngaimpe and Gulgul Nyugang Aboriginal Corporations. Joe also advises the Australian Government as a member of the National Advisory Council on Alcohol and Other Drugs and participates in various peak bodies in the sector.

Waverney Innes

BA (Hons), Dip Ed, M. Clin Psych

Waverney is a Clinical Psychologist with over 20 years of experience, specialising in children and families. She is a Senior Clinical Psychologist and Deputy Director at Central Coast Local Health District's Psychology Department. Waverney completed the Clinical Leadership Program with the Clinical Excellence Commission and is a member of the Australian Clinical Psychology Association. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Psychology and Education, a Diploma of Education, and a Master's in Clinical Psychology.

Adam McEwen

B App Sc, MPH

Adam is an experienced professional in environmental and public health, with over 20 years as a senior environmental health officer at NSW Health. Currently, he serves as Chairperson of Bungree Aboriginal Association, overseeing nearly 30 programs across the Central Coast. Adam is also a board member at Central Coast Sports College and has a strong background in sports coaching. He holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Applied Science (Environmental Health) and Public Health.

Lavinia Rarinca

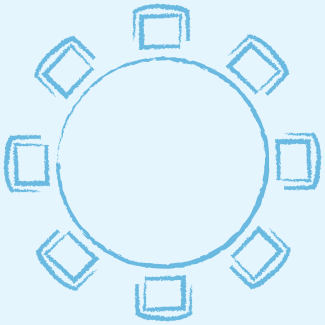
MBA GAICD

Lavinia is an experienced management consultant with a strong background in technology transformation, having worked across Australia, Europe, and the USA. She has successfully led business performance improvements across sectors such as banking, manufacturing, and pharmaceuticals. Previously, she held senior roles at Westpac, including Head of Transformation Excellence. Lavinia is passionate about supporting purpose-driven organisations and holds degrees in Engineering (Computer Science), Technology (Advanced Control Systems), and an MBA.

Lyndelle Taylor, Company Secretary

Dip.Law (LPAB), GDLP, AGIA, GAICD

Lyndelle Taylor is a lawyer, admitted to the Supreme Court of NSW and the High Court of Australia in 2008. With over 15 years of experience consulting not-for-profit boards on governance, compliance, and legal matters, she became Coast Shelter's Company Secretary in May 2023. Lyndelle is also a member of the NSW Law Society and holds qualifications from the Governance Institute of Australia and the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Executive Team



Lee Shearer APM

Chief Executive Officer

Lee Shearer has been the CEO of Coast Shelter since late 2023, bringing over 25 years of senior leadership experience. Previously, she served as Chief Operating Officer at Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council and held significant roles in NSW Government, including Deputy Secretary/Resources Regulator at the Department of Planning and Environment and Chief Compliance Officer at the Department of Industry. A former lawyer and police officer, Lee was awarded the Australian Police Medal for Distinguished Service, reflecting her commitment to community welfare and safety.



Rachael Glasson

Director of Client Services

Bachelor of Social Science

Rachael commenced her career in the Community Services sector at Coast Shelter, after the completion of a Bachelor of Social Science at the University of Newcastle. Rachael has experience across SHS programs, case management, domestic and family violence and managing multi-site programs and teams. Rachael is passionate about developing and maintaining a healthy and thriving workplace culture, which flows onto providing trusting, trauma informed services and programs for all Coast Shelter clients.



Ashlee Gunstone

Chief Operations Officer

Bachelor of Human Resource Management

Ashlee truly believes in performance through people and is passionate about coaching and creating exceptional employment experiences and alignment to meaning and purpose across the organisation. Ashlee is an experienced People & Culture professional, with a Bachelor of Human Resource Management from Macquarie University and extensive experience working across FMCG and For-Purpose organisations.



Jason Haynes

Chief Financial Officer

Bachelor of Commerce, Member of Chartered Accountants ANZ

Jason is the Chief Financial Officer at Coast Shelter, having joined the organisation in early 2019 after starting his accounting career in the public sector. A Central Coast local, he is deeply passionate about Coast Shelter's vision and mission. With his extensive financial and accounting expertise, Jason is committed to driving growth and developing new opportunities to enhance Coast Shelter's impact.



Crystal Lindsay

Project and Compliance Lead

Bachelor Information Technology and Marketing

Crystal is an experienced leader with expertise in driving continuous improvement across private and public sectors, including highly regulated industries and organisations. She has successfully navigated complex mergers and acquisitions, focusing on regulatory compliance, corporate affairs, and brand transformation. With a proven track record of building and leading high-performing teams, Crystal prioritises client experience, while driving business growth and social impact.



Erin Maxwell

Marketing and Communications Manager

Bachelor of Communication

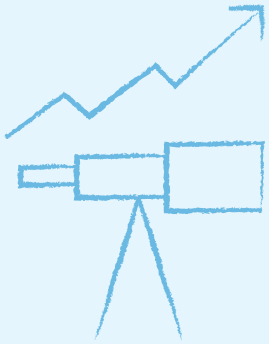
Erin brings diverse experience in the marketing and communications field, and a passion for crafting accessible messaging that turns complex ideas into clear, impactful content. Specialising in stakeholder engagement, Erin believes in the importance of community partnerships and collaborations to enhance Coast Shelter's reach and amplify its impact within the community.

Looking Ahead

As Coast Shelter continues to respond to the evolving needs of our community, we are dedicated to increasing our capacity and enhancing the range of services we offer. In the coming year, we have several key initiatives that will enable us to expand our impact and provide more comprehensive support for individuals and families experiencing homelessness and domestic violence.

Bail Accommodation Support Service Program

One of our most significant projects this year was the establishment of a Bail Assistance Support Service Refuge, which opened in July 2024. This program offers a safe and structured environment for young people involved in the youth justice system and acts as a diversion program to prevent reoffending and future contact with the justice system. By offering tailored programs, therapeutic support and a stable environment, the program will play a critical role in helping with family restoration where possible, prevent further involvement with the justice system and build on the young person's capacity to engage in education. We believe this initiative will not only address a key gap in services on the Central Coast but also have a lasting impact on the lives of vulnerable youth by offering them a pathway to a brighter future.



Diversifying and Expanding Fundraising Streams

To ensure the sustainability of our programs and meet the growing demand for our services, Coast Shelter is placing a strong focus on diversifying and expanding our fundraising streams. In addition to traditional avenues such as our annual Sleepout and Christmas Appeal, we aim to develop new partnerships with local businesses, secure larger grants, and explore working further with philanthropic foundations and trusts. By strengthening our corporate and community relationships, we hope to increase financial support for our programs, allowing us to further extend our reach. Our goal is to create a more resilient and diversified funding model that supports both the expansion of current services and the development of new initiatives.

Exploring Transitional Housing Opportunities

Another critical focus for the year ahead is exploring new transitional housing opportunities in collaboration with community partners. We recognise that stable housing is essential for long-term recovery, particularly for clients transitioning out of crisis accommodation. By working closely with local housing providers, developers, and government agencies, we aim to identify new avenues for expanding our transitional housing capacity. These partnerships will enable us to offer more options for clients who are ready to move beyond short-term accommodation and begin rebuilding their lives in secure, supportive environments. Expanding transitional housing not only alleviates the pressure on our refuges but also provides our clients with a crucial stepping stone toward sustainable independence.

Looking ahead, Coast Shelter is committed to growing our capacity to meet the increasing needs of our community. Through these initiatives and others, we aim to create meaningful, lasting change in the lives of those we support.

Financial Summary

Income

for the year ended 30 June 2024

During the financial year Coast Shelter generated $11.698 million (up 1.25% on $11.5m in FY23). This included $9.691 million that was derived from government funding, $729,240 was sourced from donations and fundraising.

A standout achievement was the remarkable growth in revenue derived from government fee for services $378,884 which was an impressive $201,289 above last year. We appreciate the valuable time and effort contributed by our dedicated staff in our refuges. Their commitment and selfless service have been instrumental in achieving the increase.

Government funding included contracts with both Commonwealth DSS and state governments DCJ, continued to provide financial stability. These funds allow us to fulfil our mission and deliver critical services to the community. For Coast Shelter services we received $434,400 in Commonwealth grant funding and $8.6 million in NSW Department of Communities and Justice grants.

Expenses

for the year ended 30 June 2024

During the financial year Coast Shelter recorded total expenditure of $13.2 million. Within this total, a substantial portion of $12.2 million was spent on running our specialist homelessness and other services. Youth Homelessness services remained our most substantial expenditure category followed by our Accommodation services for women with or without children including domestic and family violence, accommodation services for young women and accommodation services for men.

With a net deficit of $1.5 million (FY23 had a surplus of $25,626). The year-on-year change was mainly driven by an increase to isolated one-off costs during the year. However, the normalised result is strong, with resilient cashflows.

Considerable challenges remained in our operating environment.

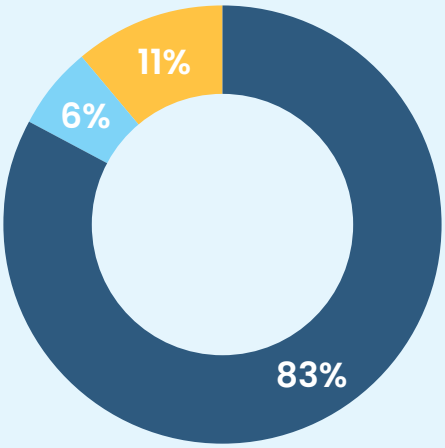
- Higher cost of living and inflationary pressures across all services.
- Increased compliance requirements and costs across the organisation's portfolio of services and activities.

Despite these challenges, Coast Shelter remained focused on upgrading and replacing some of our refuges and delivering our Specialist Homelessness Services. Coast Shelter has once again been awarded a clean bill of health from our auditors, having received an unqualified audit opinion. Sound cost management practices in FY25 and beyond will ensure that Coast Shelter delivers services with a surplus. We remain steadfast in our commitment to fulfilling our mission and executing our three-year strategy.

FY24 Revenue

Government subsidies, grants and program funding represented our main sources of revenue in FY24, followed by Donations and fundraising and Other revenue.

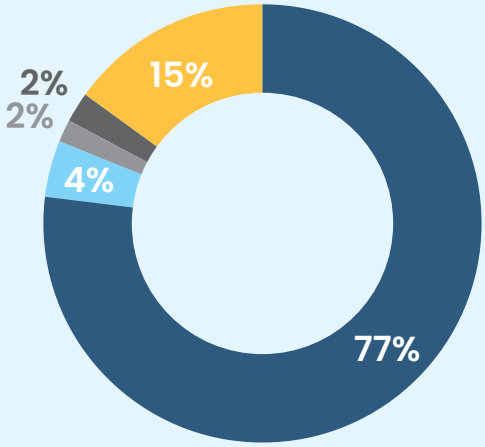
Revenue	$,000
Government subsidies, grants and program funding	9,700
Donation and fundraising	729
Other revenue	1,269
Total revenue	**11,698**



FY24 Expenses

Our expenses increased by 14.5% this year. Wages increased by 10.6% due to the introduction of new programs and services.

Expenses	$,000
Wages, salaries and related expenses	10,184
Program costs and consumables	538
Depreciation and amortisation expenses	243
Property costs	284
Other expenses	1,959
Total expenses	**13,208**



Help us create a community where everyone has a safe place to call home and is empowered to thrive.

Make a Donation

Your generosity provides life-changing support—Coast Shelter accepts donations of funds, non perishable food, household goods, and essentials, helping us meet the diverse needs of our clients and make a lasting impact. Visit our website or call the office to find out more.

Fundraise

By hosting a fundraiser or event, you can make a direct impact in the lives of those facing hardship, helping Coast Shelter provide vital support and services to our community. Call the office to find out how you can get started.

Volunteer

Join us as a volunteer to make a hands-on difference—your time and skills help bring hope, support, and a fresh start to those in need in our community. If you'd like to find out more about volunteering, please visit our website.

346 Mann Street
North Gosford
New South Wales 2250

P 02 4325 3540
E admin@coastshelter.org.au
facebook.com/coastshelter
instagram.com/coastshelter/
linkedin.com/company/coast-shelter/

Coast Shelter is registered with the independent national regulator of charities, the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC).

www.coastshelter.org.au

Coast**Shelter**